(c) and (d) The estimated growth rate of SSIs to be set up in the State of Rajasthan by the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan is 7%.

Unidentified flying object in Himachal Pradesh

181. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scientist of ISRO come across an unidentified flying object (UFO) during a scientific expedition in Himachal Pradesh on September 27, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it was an espionage device;

(d) if so, the country or organization responsible for the same; and

(e) the steps taken to improve detecting machinery to be more effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A team of scientists from ISRO and the Government college, Dharmashala were at the Samudra-Tapu glacial region, near Chandra Tal, Lahaul and Spiti District, Himachal Pradesh for an expedition to study the glacial retreat, when they sighted one unidentified object of 3-4 feet size, which had a set of balloons attached to it. The object moved downward and later upward to the ridge top and then into the atmosphere, after which visual sighting was lost. The object was visible for about 40 minutes. The sighting was reported to the local Police and the Military authorities.

(c) to (e) However, the object was photographed, being at a very high altitude, its exact nature could not be determined.

Joint Communication Satellite between ISRO and Boeing

182. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ISRO and Boeing Satellite Systems of USA are jointly building a Communication Satellite very soon;